

The Gazette

Home of Lake D'Arbonne

Union Parish's
hometown
newspaper
for more than
a century.

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"Be Just and Fear Not" Thursday, November 13, 2008 • 50¢

Around Town

Thanksgiving celebration set

The Union Parish Thanksgiving Celebration will take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nov. 22 at the Bernice Civic Center. The free event will feature a Thanksgiving dinner and free health screenings. It is sponsored by Healthy Start ABC's of Union Parish. For more information call Maranda at 368-3156.

Library to sell books

Friends of Union Public Library will hold a Fall Book Sale on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the library, 202 W. Jackson St. in Farmerville. The event, a fundraiser for the library, will feature not only gently used books, but also cd's, tapes, and movies. Homemade treats will be for sale as well. For information about the event or about donating items for the sale, call 368-9226

D'Arbonne Dutch oven meeting

The D'Arbonne Dutch oven society will meet Saturday at 9 a.m. at the state park. Potluck served around 11:30 a.m. Call Kent Hogan at 368-8441 or Michael and Janice Bearden at 368-8230.

Sparta Commission to meet

The Sparta Groundwater Commission will meet Thursday at 3 p.m. at the Union Parish Courthouse Annex, 303 East Water St., in Farmerville.

Arbor Rose event coming

The Arbor Rose presents "Maintain your Brain" presented by the Alzheimer's Association. The event will be held on Nov. 20 at 2 p.m. Contact Kathy Watkins at 368-1848.

Presidential exhibit set

All Hail the Chief! The Union Parish Library salutes Presidential history this month. Visit the lobby display case and view Presidential letters, collectibles, and memorabilia provided on loan from the University of Louisiana at Monroe and Alan Futch.

Reunion planning begins

Planning for the Farmerville High School 25th Year Reunion for the summer of 2009 is under way. Contact Elanda (Lewis) Spencer, 301-821-5039 or Debra Lewis, 940-498-1569. Classes of 1983 & 1985 invited to join in our celebration.

Playoff bound



Gazette photo by Jennifer Kilcrease

Members of the Farmerville football team pose with the District 2-2A championship trophy at a pep rally last week. The Farmers face Oakdale in the first round of the Class 2A playoffs Friday at 7 p.m. at Doc Elliott Stadium. **For complete coverage of the Farmers' upcoming game, see the special section inside.**

Town approves TIF district

By Scott Beder
scott@fgazette.com

The Town of Farmerville approved the creation of a Tax Increment Financing District during Monday night's regular meeting.

The new TIF district, located along the Hwy 2 business corridor, which includes Wal-Mart and Eagle Point, is designed to use sales tax monies to fund infrastructure projects.

"This is going to be an asset for us," Farmerville mayor Willie Davis said.

With a TIF in place, Farmerville will have more flexibility to attract new businesses to the Hwy 2 corridor.

If a new business requires added infrastructure, the town can decide to use money collected from the TIF to retire debt from a bond sold to fund the project.

The sales tax collected for a TIF would be a percentage over and above the sales tax collected in 2007.

"If we collected \$100,000 from the district last year, and the following year collected \$120,000, then \$20,000 would (be eligible to) go to

the TIF," Town attorney Joe Cusimano said.

The Town is not obligated to use TIF money and has final say on any the approval of any projects.

Possible projects are also analyzed for the Town by Southwest Securities, who determine the feasibility of any venture the Town might undertake. A possible project would also have to be approved by a bonding attorney.

"You are one step ahead of other communities now that you have it in place," said Bill Willson, representing Southwest Securities. "But, you (the Town Council) have the ultimate control."

Mayor-elect Stein Baughman Jr., said he likes the flexibility a TIF gives the town as it relates to attracting and supporting new businesses.

"It's very proactive," Baughman said. "It puts the town in a position that we don't have to build it for them to come, but we have a vehicle in place (to fund projects)."

TIF districts have been implemented in Monroe, Ruston and Sterlington.

Residents react to Obama's victory

McCain carried UP

By Willie Payne
Special to The Gazette

Barack Obama's election as America's first black president has brought a new sense of hope to millions, including some Union Parish residents, uncertain about America's democratic system.

They celebrated at home, in churches, sports bars, gas station parking lots, barber shops and on school playgrounds.

The excitement was most apparent at the start of school last Wednesday at Farmerville Junior High.

Jermarsai Jones, 14, and many of his friends and classmates chanted "Obama, Obama", in hallways and on the playground.

"I'm excited because I feel Obama will make the change that will help everyone," he said. "Like getting more money for schools so we (students) can have cleaner, nicer schools to go to and better books, equipment and good teachers like other students have at other schools."

Some Union Parish voters summarize Obama's overwhelming victory over Senator John McCain to Obama's open appeal to people of every age, race, income and religion and having a better plan for getting this country back on track.

What started out as a dinner party at the home of George and Muriel Finley of Farmerville, ended up a political party with president-elect Obama being the main course

UNION PARISH ELECTION RESULTS

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS

Union Parish (29 of 29 precincts reporting - 100%)	Votes	
Baldwin/ Castle, Constitution	0%	21
Obama/ Biden, Democratic	29%	3,103
McKinney/ Clemente, Green	0%	42
Nader/ Gonzalez, Independent	0%	27
Paul/ Goldwater, Taxpayers	0%	47
Amondson/ Pietten, Prohibition	0%	1
McCain/ Palin, Republican	70%	7,619
La Riva/ Puryear, Socialism and Liberation	0%	1
Harris/ Kennedy, Socialist Workers	0%	7

U. S. SENATOR

Union Parish (29 of 29 precincts reporting - 100%)	Votes	
Richard Fontanesi (L)	1%	85
John Kennedy (R)	60%	6,175
Mary Landrieu (D)	38%	3,966
"Jay" Patel (N)	1%	59
Robert Stewart (R)	1%	60

CA NO. 1 (ACT 935-SB32) - 2 1/2 TERMS IN 3 CONSEC. TERMS NOT APPT./ELECT.

Union Parish (29 of 29 precincts reporting - 100%)	Votes	
For	70%	6,177
Against	30%	2,710

CA NO. 2 (ACT 937-SB296) - EXTRA SESSION - 7 DAYS PRIOR

Union Parish (29 of 29 precincts reporting - 100%)	Votes	
For	60%	5,157
Against	40%	3,503

CA NO. 3 (ACT 931-HB183) - LEGIS. - TEMP. SUCCESSOR ORDERED ACTIVE DUTY

Union Parish (29 of 29 precincts reporting - 100%)	Votes	
For	64%	5,497
Against	36%	3,134

CA NO. 4 (ACT 932-HB420) - INCREASE GEN. SERVANCE TAX ALLOCAT. TO PARISH

Union Parish (29 of 29 precincts reporting - 100%)	Votes	
For	41%	3,518
Against	59%	5,108

CA NO. 5 (ACT 933-HB461) - NEW PROP. PURCHASED/ REPLACE PROP. SOLD

Union Parish (29 of 29 precincts reporting - 100%)	Votes	
For	41%	3,532
Against	59%	5,022

CA NO. 6 (ACT 936-SB295) - REMOVE CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS ON BLIGHTED PROP.

Union Parish (29 of 29 precincts reporting - 100%)	Votes	
For	37%	3,138
Against	63%	5,407

CA NO. 7 (ACT 934-HB584) - CONTRIBUTIONS TO POST-EMPLOY. BENEFIT FUNDS

Union Parish (29 of 29 precincts reporting - 100%)	Votes	
For	38%	3,173
Against	62%	5,261

of conversation.

Still rejoicing in the beauty of the election of American's first black president, George Finley, 62, a retired General Motors employee, said, "It took a long time coming but I knew it would come. People young and old, black and white, Hispanic and Jewish, rich and poor sent a message to the world they were dissatisfied with President Bush and were ready for a change in Washington. President Obama

is a smart man. I'm confident he has the ability to pull Republicans, Democrats and others together in Washington and select the best to help him turn this country around."

Finley agrees with opinions that some voted for Obama because he is black. "But I believe America and the world voted for him because he is an intelligent man who's best for the job and just happens to be

See Obama, page 2A

Parish school scores released

Gazette Staff Report

School Performance Scores have been released by the Louisiana State Department of Education. Union Parish reports that of the seven schools within the district, four showed minimal academic growth and three are considered Baseline School Performance Scores and are figured on test data from the two most recent spring test administrations and attendance/dropout or graduation data from two and three years prior.

The Baseline SPS is used to determine Performance Labels and Academically Unacceptable schools. Prior to be the beginning of this school year, preliminary release of these results indicated Bernice as an Academically Unacceptable School and students attending Bernice were offered School choice. School choice is only available year by year as long as a school remains below 60, which is the cutoff level

set by the Department of Education.

"Bernice and Spearsville both failed," Union Parish superintendent Steve Dozier said. "There was a plan in place prior to my arrival. We've refined some things and will show improvement this year through benchmark testing. They certainly have to be aware that their school is non performing and they have to step it up to get kids where they need to be. Dropping six points and another four at Bernice is not acceptable."

Farmerville Junior High showed the most improvement, raising its Baseline SPS from 69.7 to 75.6.

"I'm very impressed with the progress Farmerville Junior High made," Dozier said. "They truly came together last year as a team. As a team approach, they attacked weakness with the school plan and made progress by gaining 5.9 points."

Each school in Union Parish has completed a

See Scores page 2B

Detention center prison garden nixed

By Scott Beder
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The Union Parish Police Jury's plan to start a prisoner's garden at the airport is officially dead.

The Police Jury had originally approved a plan for the prisoners at the Union Parish Detention Center to cultivate their own vegetables on a two-acre tract of land at the airport, but residents of the Kings Lake subdivision opposed the idea.

Kings Lake is located directly across the airport on Spillway Road.

Residents first voiced their

opposition at the Oct. 14 Police Jury meeting.

During last Tuesday night's Police Jury meeting, juror Alvin made a motion to scrap the plan.

"We're not going to have it at the airport," Allen said. "We would like to have (a garden) but not one as controversial."

The idea of the garden was originally proposed to help defray the cost of food supplied to the inmates and to provide something for them to do. However, Kings Lake residents were vehemently opposed to having inmates working so close to their subdivision.



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